

Elevator Pitch for your Job Search

Marketers and public relations specialists know that in many situations you have just the time it takes for an elevator ride to grab the attention of a reporter. Hence, the phrase “elevator pitch”, came to be to explain the amount of time you have to explain your business or pitch your story. Can this correlate to your personal elevator pitch when it comes to sharing the key aspects of your career with someone?

I recommend that you make three “Pitches”:

1. **A Twitter Pitch** – limited to 140 characters. This is for text, Twitter, email, or even the back of your personal business card
2. **Verbal Elevator Pitch**. This is your 30 seconds to tell who, what and what next.
3. **Written Elevator Pitch**. This is a written version that can be used in emails, job applications, etc.

Creating your Personal Elevator Pitch:

You want to include a few key statements about yourself:

1. **Your position**. This is your key statement. “I am an engineer”, “I am an IT recruiter”, “I am a salesman”, “I am a goat herder”, “I am a safety expert”. Keep it very simple for now.

What if you are more than one thing? You can write multiple pitches, but each one should be one thing.

2. **General Experience**. This gives listeners an idea of what level of expertise you have. “I have 22 years of IT experience, the last 4 years in recruiting”, “I have 5 years experience in pool maintenance”, “I have 2 years of bookkeeping, and 3 years general accounting”

What if you have many different job experiences? Then focus on the years that are relevant to what you are seeking and summarize the rest. I.e. “I have 30 years professional experience, the last 5 years as a project manager”

3. **Your sub-pitch**. This is where you focus one or two things that are most relevant to what you are looking for. “I’ve supervised over 12 projects ranging from \$40K to \$1.8M – all in Fortune 100 companies”, “I have built Technical Support Departments from 5 to 50 people, on three continents”, “I have converted two different accounting departments from GAAP to IFRS”

Depending on your line of work, this may be accomplishments, responsibilities, or aspects of your experience that are most relevant to the next job you want to have.

4. **Add interest**. Add one more little, enticing piece of information. (you may not be able to fit this into your Twitter Pitch). “My Hebrew comes in handy working in Israel”, “I have worked mostly with small, software companies”, “I am trained to herd the unique New Zealand Arapawa Goats”
5. **Apply it to your listener**. If you know who your listener/reader is, you can apply your background and experience to them to tailor your message. “My concepts attract new business from companies like ...”, “Because I have worked in Atlanta for 25 years in IT, I can pull from a large network”

If you are using your pitch in a cover letter or interview, direct this last portion of your pitch to create a comparison to the businesses situation, perhaps their direct competition if possible.

The Twitter Pitch:

This exercise really helps you focus on the core of what you are because you are so limited. Once you get to the core, its not hard to build up to the next level. Take the items from at least the first 3 of the 5 points above and create your Twitter Pitch:



"I'm an IT recruiter with 22 years in IT, 4 in recruiting. I place mid-level IT professionals at technology companies, mostly in Atlanta."

Work on this Twitter Pitch to make it succinct, crisp and easy to say – avoiding abbreviations.

The Verbal Elevator Pitch:

Now, take that Pitch, which is the core of what you do and expand it into something that you can say in 30 seconds.

"I am an IT recruiter. I spent 22 years in IT, and then I moved into recruiting, where I have been for the last 4 years. In IT, I worked for three different software companies and built Technical Support Departments from 5 to 50 people, on three continents. Over the years I hired over 400 people in the Atlanta area. So as a recruiter, I am able to draw from a large network of local resources."

You must practice this! Your language must feel natural and sound like you talk.

The Written Elevator Pitch:

This is where you can get into some more specific details of your background. And change up the wording just a bit.

"I am an IT recruiter. I worked in IT for 22 years and then I moved into recruiting, where I have been for the last 4 years. While I was in IT, I worked for three different software companies where I built Technical Support Departments that ranged in size from 5 to 50 people with operations on three continents. During those years managing Technical Support, I hired over 400 people in the Atlanta area alone. When I moved into recruiting 4 years ago, I was able to draw from a large network of local resources. I continue to expand that network in Atlanta."

Using your Personal Elevator Pitch:

The principle behind each of these pitches is that you need to know exactly who you are, what skills you own, and how you have used them. Better still you need to be able to communicate those same things in a short, cohesive, cognizant statement if time is limited.

A couple of situations where your elevator pitch will work perfectly are networking events or job fairs. Yes, you may hand someone your "real" professionally prepared resume, but, what will you say to that job fair representative that will make him/her put your resume in the "second look" pile. What will you say to those you meet at a networking event that will pique their interest and entice them to spend more time with you, finding out more about you in greater detail?

You have created your personal pitch, but if you don't memorize it, practice it and know how to modify it depending upon your audience, you could end up stammering and jabbering just as if you didn't take all the time to create your pitch in the first place.

"Tell me about yourself" is a typical question you will be asked on any interview. When asked, you want your personal elevator pitch to just flow. To do that you need to write out your pitch, memorize it, practice it in front of a mirror, a family member, your employment and training rep, your dog, or the car in front of you in line at the drive-through. You want the words to just flow.

You want your message to be crystal clear. Refer to it enough throughout the interview, that if the interviewer is asked to tell their boss about you when your interview is done, you know how they will position you after you leave.

Teach your spouse, your kids, your parents and let them market for you.